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ABSTRACT

In Winnebago County, Iowa, the earliest school district was the township, organized with ungraded one-room schools. The town of Buffalo Center worked with its township school district to become, in 1895, a town independent school district with its service area being the township. In 1896 the new district offered graded elementary and high schools. The Iowa School Code of 1897 allowed school taxes to be used for transporting students. This provision allowed the district to become, in 1954, the first consolidated school district west of the Mississippi River. In the 1970s and 1980s, the district was the first in the state to implement administrative consolidation, one of the earliest in Iowa to participate in a whole-grade sharing program, and the first that involved four cooperating districts. An enrollment of 850 students in the 400 square mile area of these four cooperating districts is an indication of how sparse population can define school organization, classes, and services in much of rural Iowa--and by extension much of rural America. The presence of activities, athletics, curriculum, media, and special programs directors has been sporadic, as have classes in geography, government, advanced math, general music, psychology, social studies, sociology, bookkeeping, business, and drafting. Computer technology and data processing are not offered. Efforts to form a permanent coalition with other districts have thus far been unsuccessful at the polls. Includes data tables detailing trends in population, school organization, and curriculum offerings. (TD)

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100 YEARS OF CHANGE FOR BETTER SCHOOLS
A Short Report of Buffalo Township, Winnebago County, Iowa and Its Schools from 1895 to 1995

William H. Dreier, Professor Emeritus,
University of Northern Iowa,
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Ronald Pilgrim, Superintendent,
Buffalo Center-Rake-Lakota Community Schools

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By 1895 the 12 townships of Winnebago County had all been settled, one room schools were in place and the county had two towns with grade and high schools. Buffalo Township included one incorporated place. The Township School District included nine sub-districts. Many people were clustering around the center of the township where the village had two one room schools. This paper will briefly review the major changes in the schools of Buffalo Township between 1895 and 1995.

I. The Early Years - Township Nongraded Schools to Consolidated District

An early newspaper account reports that by 1895 sub-district # 5 had two one room schools. It had one representative on the nine member township school board which operated the 10 schools in the nine sub-districts. A more detailed history of the bringing about of a Town Independent School District which included the 36 square mile township around the newly incorporated Buffalo Center has been written. (1)

The new district received permission of the citizens to erect a $15,000 brick school house and offer graded elementary and high school in 1896. After the state of Iowa passed the School Code of 1897 allowing schools taxes to be used for the cost of transporting students sub-district #3 asked that its students be included in this new Consolidated School District which was the first west of the Mississippi River.

Two years later a total of seven of the nine sub-districts were transported to the center graded building. By 1921 the last two sub-district one room schools closed and the student became part of the Buffalo Center Consolidated School. The first IOWA EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORY reports the 1904-5 high school enrollment was 22 males and 24 females. (2) The U.S. Census in 1890 for the newly incorporated town of Buffalo Center was 875 people.

By the 1910 Census there were a total of seven incorporated places within 15 miles of Buffalo Center. See there location in Figure A.

Prepared for and presented at the 87th Annual Rural Education Conference, sponsored by the NREA, Salt Lake City, UT, October 6, 1995

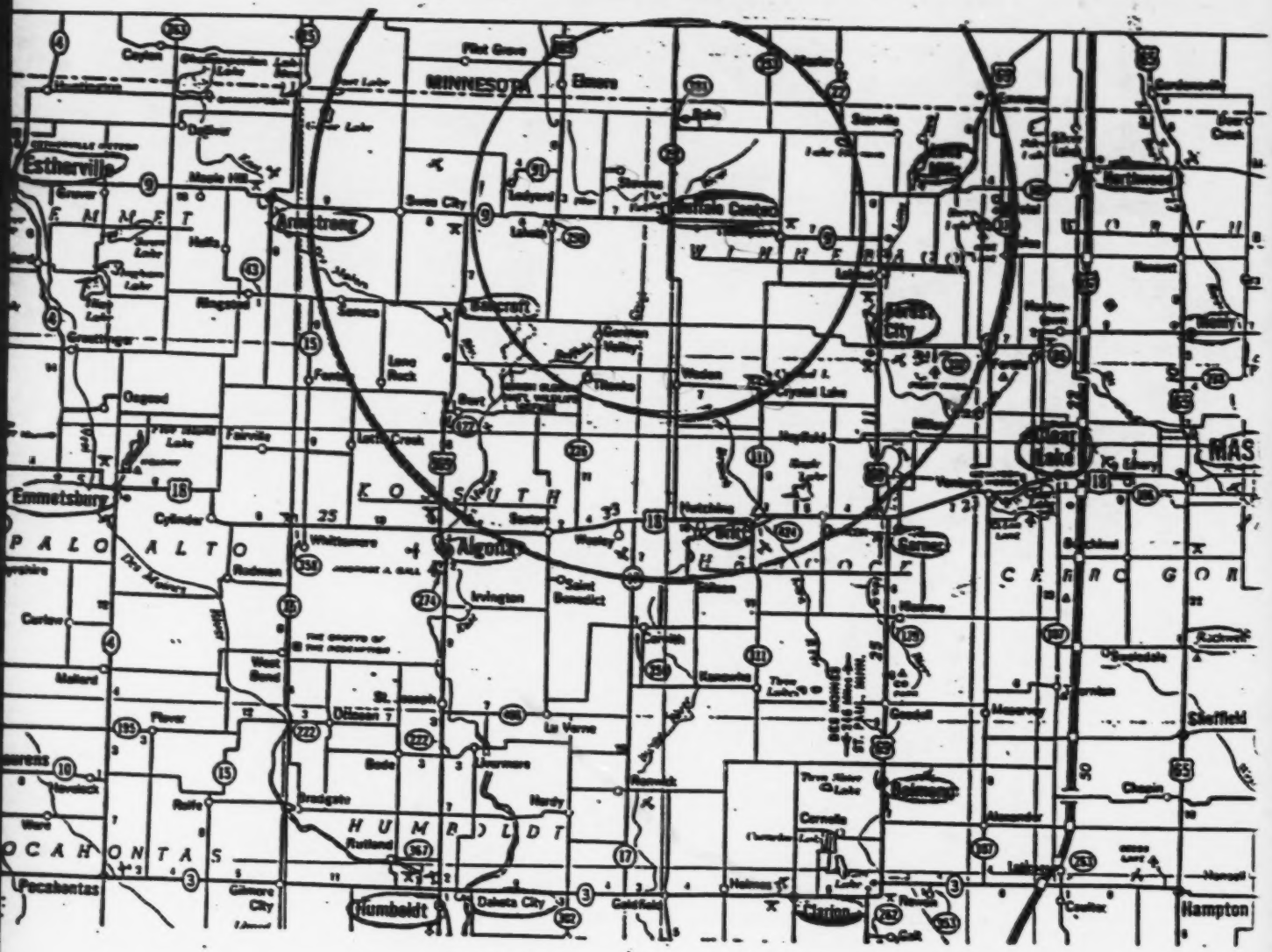
MINNESOTA
Estherville
Emmetsburg
Armstrong
Algona
Humboldt
Dakota City
Pocahontas
Gilmore City
Clarion
Hampton
Sheffield
Chapin
Corwith
Garner
Britt
Crystal Lake
Swea City
Buffalo Center
Lu Verne
Irvington
Saint Benedict
Rutland
Bode
Bradgate
Livermore
Renwick
Ottosen
Farnhamville
Lake Creek
Cylinder
Whittemore
Rolfe
Havelock
Mallard
Curlew
Ringsted
Graettinger
Osgood
Cleghorn
Fenton
Thor
Woden
Lone Rock
Seneca
Wesley
Titonka
Britt
Hutchins
Corwith
Cornelia
Three Lakes
Crystal Lake
Meservey
Thornton
Rockwell
Swaledale
Latimer
Iowa Falls
Alden
Ellsworth
Stanhope
Jewell
Randall
Webster
Gowrie
Callender
Harcourt
Otho
Lehigh
Gilmore City
Pocahontas
Rolfe
Havelock
Mallard
Curlew
Emmetsburg
Estherville
Armstrong
Swea City
Buffalo Center
Algona
Humboldt
Dakota City
Clarion
Hampton
Sheffield
Chapin
Corwith
Garner
Britt
Crystal Lake

FIGURE A.

A total of 10 places within 15 miles of Buffalo Township are named on the this recent Iowa road map. By the 1920's all the eight incorporated places had high schools with their graded elementary school . In addition many one room schools were located in the farm area throughout the county.

Buffalo Township is located on the western edge of the county. While the only town is Buffalo Center the 15 mile radius includes two towns in Hancock County and four in Kossuth County.

The state of Iowa passed the Community School District law in the early 1950's. It required that all the land of the state become part of a high school district and each district enroll at least 300 students, Kindergarten through 12th grade. Each county board of education was to work out a county wide plan. They were to work with the local graded and nongraded school districts to determine where the students from the former one room school would attend. In some cases existing high school units with less than 300 enrolled joined another high school district as well as with some one room school districtfs to form new Colmmunity School.

The decade of the 1950's and following years brought many changes to the township and Buffalo Center Consolidated School which served its students. Table I. reports the population of Buffalo Center between 1900 and 1950. It had some increases and decreases with 1950 being the nost in 50 years. The population of the other seven incorporated places within a 15 mile radius can be compared in Table I.

TABLE I

The present Superintendent, Ronald Pilgrim, has summerized the changes of the Buffalo Center Consolidated School District in the last 50 years in the next section. Following that the final section will show the changes in school organization, classes, and services available to the Buffalo Township area citizens in this 100 years of their history. Specific comparisons will be made for 20 year periods starting with 1910 and continuing with 1930, 1950, 1970. 1990 and 1995.

II. From One Township and One Place to Several Townships and Places

Iowa's earliest school district was the Township and it was organized with one room schools to fit the needs of the people. A history of

TABLE I.

1900 to 1950 CENSUS POPULATION OF IOWA PLACES, VILLAGES AND TOWNS WITHIN 15 MILES OF BUFFALO TOWNSHIP, IOWA

PLACES	CENSUS POPULATION					
	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950
BUFFALO CENTER	875	753	894	768	911	1,087
RAKE		163	254	310	329	351
THOMPSON	450	500	548	538	664	698
CRYSTAL LAKE	246	143	191	271	301	286
WODEN		162	188	258	305	272
GERMAN VALLEY	NEVER INCORPORATED					
TITONKA	224	228	418	473	573	589
LOKATA	384	436	472	409	457	443
LEDYARD	257	222	246	245	317	327
STEVENS	NEVER INCORPORATED					

Orange Township, Black Hawk County, reports that it once had 13 one room schools and one or more were on sleds so they could be moved in the fall to where the children were. (3) This early dependence on population has been part of the history of schools in any Towhship. For that reason it is helpful to look at the changes just in the population of Buffalo Township, Winnebago County. Table II shows the population of the county and the towship as well as its one town by 20 year periods from 1890 to 1980.

TABLE II

On November 10, 1953 voters went to the polls to decide on the plan of reorganization for several schools in the Buffalo Center area. The plan was approved and on July 1, 1954, Buffalo Towship became part of a Community School District when four one room school units in Winnebago County and part of a fifth one in Kossuth County became part of the new Buffalo Center Community School District. The following month the Board of Education of the newly formed district voted to close all the one room schools in the new district and transport all students to the Buffalo Center site.

This reorganization and subsequent increases in enrollment following the population buldge of World War II made it necessary for the district to increase the size and scope of its facilities. This was accomplished with building additions in 1958 and 1963 which allowed for more students and a variety of programs.

On July 1, 1975, Buffalo Center was once again on the "cutting edege" of educational change when the Buffalo Center Superintendent took on the additional responsibilities as Superintendent of the neighboring Rake Community School District. This administrative consolidation was the only one of its type in Iowa for many years. Two years later a merger plan for the two district was presented to the voters and was defeated by a slim margin. In January 1978 a second vote was overwhelmingly approved by both districts. The two units were dissolved effective July 1, 1978 and a new Buffalo Center-Rake Community School District was created.

With this reorganization each previous unit retained a K-8 attendance center and all 9-12 grade students attended the school at Buffalo Center. After six years with the this plan all students were moved to Buffalo Center and the Rake building was closed as a school. Part of the building was demolished and the remainder transferred to the town of Rake to be used as a community center.

Ten years after the merger with Rake (to the north), another round of changes were in store for the Buffalo Townsip citizens. On Janurary 12, 1987, the Lakota Consolidated School Board (on the west) approved a

TABLE II.

POPULATION CHANGES BY 20 YEARS FROM 1890 TO 1990 FOR WINNEBAGO COUNTY AND BUFFALO TOWNSHIP, IOWA

	WINNEBAGO COUNTY	BUFFALO TOWNSHIP			
YEAR	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOWN	FARM	% FARM
1890	7,325	193	0	193	100 %
1910	11,914	1,251	753	498	40.0
1930	13,143	1,381	768	613	44.4
1950	13,450	1,646	1,087	559	34.0
1970	12,990	1,537	1,118	419	27.3
1990	12,430	1,334	1,081	253	19.0

sharing arrangement with the Buffalo Center-Rake District to take effect in the fall of 1987. This arrangement called for all of the 7-12 students from Lakota to attend classes in Buffalo Center while the K-6 pupils remained at the Lakota facility. Each district had its own superintendent but shared the services of an elementary principal.

The following year (1989) another sharing agreement with a nearby district was finalized when students from the Titonka Consolidated District (southwest) integrated into some academic programs at Buffalo Center-Rake Schools with some participating in extra curricluar activities and athletics. This same year a more comprehensive plan for the area was discussed between Buffalo Center-Rake, Woden-Crystal Lake (south), Thompson (east), Titonka, and Lakota school districts.

After many meetings, a first of its kind school sharing agreement was signed by officials for Buffalo Center-Rake, Lakota, Thompson, and Titonka. This agreement was effective on July 1, 1989 and was to continue for three years with the option to renew after that date. This four-way agreement called for each district to maintain its own K-5 elementary school, for all 6-8 Middle School students to attend in either Thompson or Titonka; and for all 9-12 students to attend the high school at Buffalo Center. An obvious difficulty for the school was to select a name which incorporated the identity of five communities. This led to the designation of the high school as "North Iowa High School".

The four-way agreement continued in effect for three years at which time the Lakota Consolidated District and the Buffalo Center-Rake Community District voted to join, effective with the 1992-93 school year.

The sharing agreement which had been in effect since 1989 was renewed for another three years effective July 1, 1992. This time it was a three-way agreement since it was with the Buffalo Center-Rake-Lakota Community School District and the Thompson Community School District plus the Titonka Consolidated School District.

With the time for consideration of the renewal of the whole-grade sharing agreement approaching, the Buffalo Center-Rake-Lakota district decided to attempt a complete joining of with the other two districts. The Titonka District, however, decided not to participate in this reorganization and the vote with Thompson failed in November, 1994. The the Buffalo Center-Rake-Lakota District and the Thompson District renewed their Whole-grade sharing agreement for another year while they brought the issue to the voters a second time. This vote is scheduled for November, 1995. Titonka did not wish to be a part of any reorganization and for 1995-96 has associated itself with the Woden-Crystal Lake Community School Distict.

TABLE III.

1950 to 1990 CENSUS POPULATION OF IOWA PLACES, VILLAGES AND TOWNS WITHIN 15 MILES OF BUFFALO TOWNSHIP, IOWA

PLACES	CENSUS POPULATION 1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
BUFFALO CENTER	1,087	1,140	1,118	1,233	1,081
RAKE	351	328	324	283	238
THOMPSON	698	689	600	668	498
CRYSTAL LAKE	286	267	276	314	266
WODEN	272	283	265	258	259
GERMAN VALLEY	NEVER INCORPORATED				
TITONKA	589	647	599	658	612
LOKATA	443	459	385	330	281
LEDYARD	327	289	240	215	184
STEVENS	NEVER INCORPORATED				

The total of the proposed "North Iowa Coalition" was just over 400 square miles which would have made it the fourth largest (in area) in the state of Iowa. The projected enrollment of about 850 students gives an indication of the sparcity of population in much of Iowa and - by extension - much of rural America. It can be seen the Buffalo Township area citizens are able to change and adapt in order to provide the best education for its students.

III. Population Changes and District/Class Changes Between 1910 and 1995

As Table I gave the population of the eight towns in the first half of the 19th Century Table III reports the population changes of these places, all within a 15 mile radius of the center of Buffalo Township, in the last five decades.

TABLE III

In 1895 the township students were offered classes in the ungraded one room schools located in nine places throughout the township. This section will follow the changes in the schools for the township in its last 100s years, from 1895 to 1995.

Table IV identifies the organization of the school district; Table V will identify the classes which were availabe to the children and youth; and part C. lists the services available. All will be compared in 20 year intervals. The organization, services, and the classes given by the faculty were taken from their assignments each year listed in the Iowa Educational Directories for 1909-10, 1929-30, 1949-50, and the annual "Start of School" articles published by the Buffalo Center TRIBUNE in August of 1970, 1990, and 1995. (4)

TABLE IV.

The School Organization of Buffalo Township from 1895 to 1995 is outlined in Table IV. Winnebago County was organized in 1857 and since that time the townships had offered classes to children and youth in the one room schools sub-districts of the Township School Districts. On December 13th, 1895, the Buffalo Township voters approved the creation of a new Independent School District with its area being the 36 square miles of the township. This was unique since the ususal area of a Town Independent unit was out to the town's corporate limits. With the extention of graded schools from sub-district No. 5 (where the town was located) to No. 3 and the availability of transportation funds the district changed became the Buffalo Center Consolidated District in 1897. After dacades in this type of organization by 1970 it was well into the identity of the Buffalo Center Community School District.

Other Towmship sub-districts plus Consolidated and Community Districts have joined Buffalo Township over the years. It has has changed from a two level school - grade school (elementary) and high school (secondary) - to one offering three levels (adding a middle school). Presently the

TABLE IV.

THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION OF BUFFALO TOWNHSHIP BY 20 YEAR PERIODS

1895 TO 1950

	1895	1910	1930	1950	1970	1990	1995
SCHOOL ORGANIZATION	8 years Ungraded	8-4	6-3-3	K-6-2-3	K-6-2-4	K-5-3-4	K-5-3-4
KIND of DISTRICT	Ind/Twp	Con	Con	Con	Comm	Comm	Comm
ADMINISTRATORS							
Superintendent	Co.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
El. Principal			Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Middle/Junior High Principal			Yes	Yes	Yes		
High School Principal		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Activities Director						Yes	Yes
Athletics Director					Yes	Yes	
Curriculum Director							Yes
Media Director							Yes
Special Programs Director						Yes	
Normal Training Supervisor			Yes				
Accredited			NCA	NCA	NCA	NCA	
ENROLLMENT							
No. of Grade Teachers		8	8	6	6	15	13
No. of Grade Students		353	216	182	322		169
No. of Middle/Jr High					99	Thompson-	149
No. of Secondary		56	140		212		255
TOTAL ENROLLMENT		409	356	488	633	404	424 and 149 573

TABLE V Part A.

CLASSES OFFERED TO BUFFALO TOWNSHIP CHILDREN AND YOUTH *
A. GENERAL AND/OR COLLEGE PREPARATION

	SUBJECT	1895	1910	1930	1950	1970	1990	1995
1.	Art						yes	yes
2.	Driver Education						yes	
3.	Economics				yes		yes	
4.	English-Literature		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
5.	Foreign Languages				German	Spanish	Spanish	Spanish French
6.	General Program	3 teachers						
7.	Geography							
8.	Government						yes	
9.	History		yes	yes	yes		yes	
10.	Math - General		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	
11.	Algebra						yes	6
12.	Calculus						yes	teachers
13.	Geometry							for
14.	Trigonometry						yes	these
15.	Music - General		yes	yes				
16.	Instrumental				yes	yes	yes	yes
17.	Vocal				yes	yes	yes	yes
18.	Physical Ed./Health			yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
19.	Psychology				yes			
21.	Science - General				yes	yes	yes	
22.	Biology				yes	yes	yes	yes
23.	Chemistry					yes	yes	yes
24.	Physics					yes	yes	yes
24.	Social Studies					yes		yes
25.	Sociology						yes	
26.	Speech-Drama				yes	yes	yes	yes
27.	TAG/Special Education						yes	yes
28.	Technology Principles						yes	yes

TABLE V Part B.

CLASSES OFFERED TO BUFFALO TOWNSHIP CHILDREN AND YOUTH *
B. VOCATIONAL

	1895	1910	1930	1950	1970	1990	1995
1. Bookkeeping				yes			
2. Business						yes	
3. Commercial			yes	yes	yes		yes
4. Computer Tech.							
5. Data Processing							
6. Keyboarding							yes
7. Shorthand				yes			
8. Stenography				yes			
9. Typing				yes			
10. Domestic Arts		no					
11. Voc. Home Economics			yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
12. Industrial Arts-Shop		no			yes	yes	yes
13. Auto Mechanics						yes	
14. Vocational Agriculture			yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
15. Drafting						yes	

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* Based on Teacher's one subject or class identification listed on roster published each fall in IOWA EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORY or the BUFFALO CENTER TRIBUNE

school has four levels with the addition of first a kindergarten and then other preschool classes.

In addition to the usual administrators one or more were added after 1970. A high schoool Normal Training program was avaiable at one time and the school had NCA membership for a number of years. The total school enrollment has moved from 409 in 1910, to 633 in 1970. to 404 in 1990, and is now 424. If those who are taught and enrollment in the sharing district are included when the total is 573.

TABLE V Part 1. and Part 2.

The Classes available to Buffalo Township children and youth over the past century are grouped into two programs. The General or College Prep (Table V Part 1) and the Vocational Program (Table V Part 2) classes have been offered since at least 1930.

The number of classes has increased with more of the teachers listed as teaching in two or more different fields. The classes are more specific. The General Math, and the General Music classes were not listed in 1995. The number of teachers listing Physical Education classes has inclresed and decreased over the years. This may be due to changes in reporting. Some teachers may have been teaching one or more other classes which are not listed, which may be true for other claffications as well.

The two Vocational classes first offered in 1930, Vocational Ag and Vocational Home Economis have continued in each decade to 1995. A total of 7 classes were offered in 1950, 4 in 1970, 7 in 1990, and 5 in 1995.

TABLE VI

The Services available to children and youth attending school from Buffalo Township are listed in TABLE VI. The one constant service over the years from 1910 to 1995 is transportation. Additional services weree first listed in 1950. Both Guidance/Counseling and Library Services have come to the district but not specifically to the different age levels. Chapter I services are common to most secondary school districts but not as common is the services of a nurse listed in 1990 and 1995.

IV. Conclusion

Buffalo Township has a very unique early history of schools. Its changes in the last 50 years from a one-town Consolidated District to a multi-town Community District is common to most of the present 384 school districts in Iowa. (5) The township is unusual in its location in the center of the state but many fewer are just 10 miles south of Minnesota. Students are not often attending from more than two counties. It is like other rural districts in the mid-west with attendance centers in several places whose telephones are listed in another book and are "long-distance" numbers from the high school area.

TABLE VI.

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH ATTENDING BUFFALO TOWNSHIP SCHOOL'S

	1989	1910	1930	1950	1970	1990	1995
Chapter I - Reading/Math						yes	yes
Food							
Breakfast							yes
Lunch				yes	yes	yes	yes
Guidance - General					yes	yes	yes
Elementary							
Middle / Junior High School							
Secondary							
Library							
General				yes	yes	yes	
Elementary							
Middle / Junior High School							
Secondary							
Media Director							yes
Nurse						yes	yes
Transportation		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes

This short 100 year survey shows a number of uniquenesses for Buffalo Township and its people.

1st - The town, after becoming incorporated before 1890 worked with its Township School District to became a Town Independent School with its area being the Township and not just the town.

2nd - The new Iowa School Code which allowed the school transportation cost to come from the local school budget (plus money from the State to encourage this practice) helped the District to decide to became a Consolidated School. It was first in the state and west of the Mississippi River.

3rd - The district was the first in the state to share its Superintendent with a near-by School District for an administrative consolidation.

4th - The district became one of the very early units in Iowa to participate in a whole-grade sharing program with a three year program and the first that involved four cooperating districts.

5th - The Buffalo Township area is unique in that it has had a continuing desire for its school to enrich others. They desire its kind of excellent (see the decades of NCA membership) with others, all being located in a farming/small town (less populated) area.

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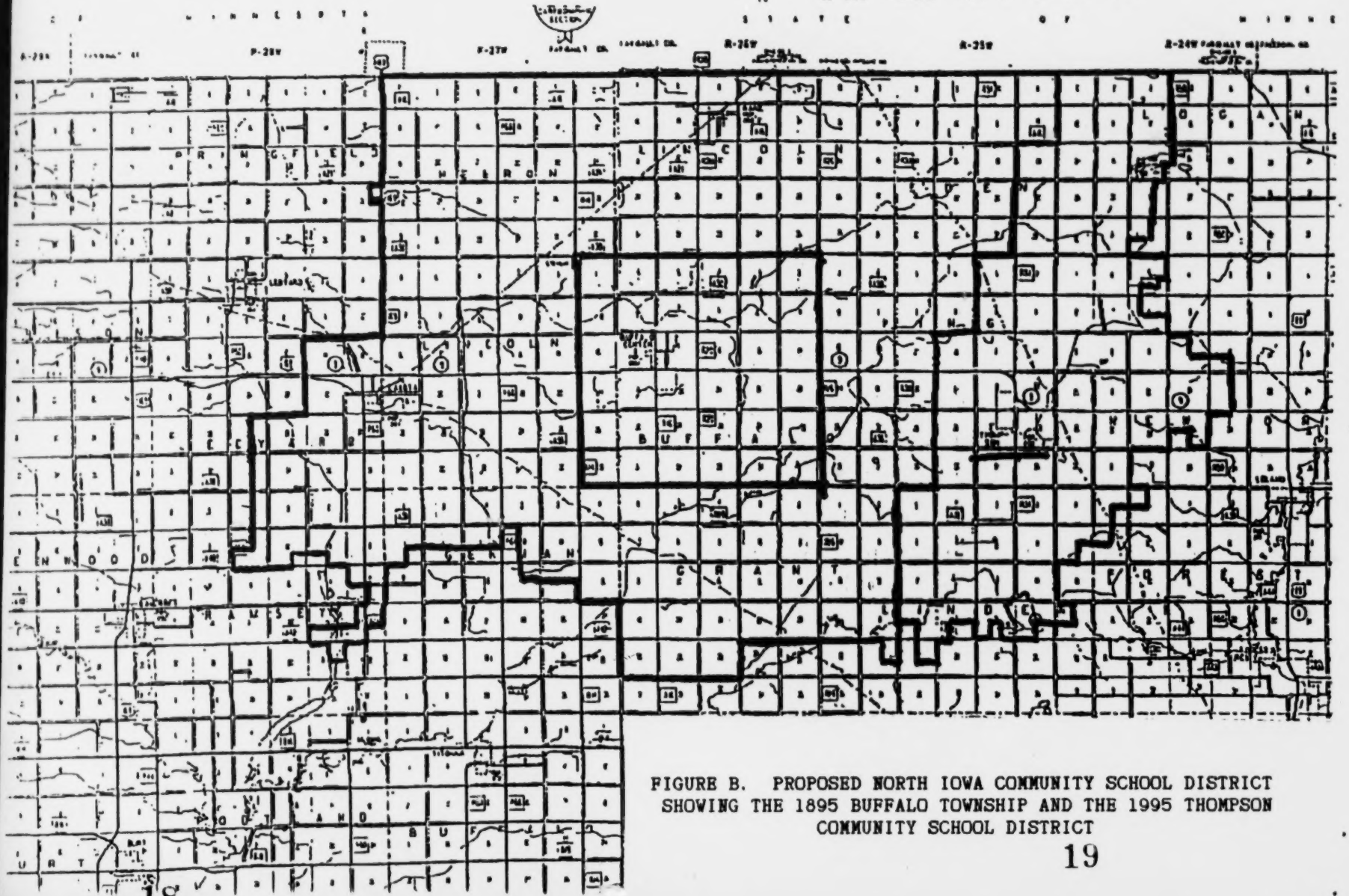

FIGURE B. PROPOSED NORTH IOWA COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT SHOWING THE 1895 BUFFALO TOWNSHIP AND THE 1995 THOMPSON COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT